REMARKS

The Examiner's comments together with the cited references have been carefully studied. Favorable reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-30 are pending in the application. Claims 1-18, 27, and 28 have been withdrawn. Withdrawn Claims 27-28 have been canceled. Claims 19-26, 29 and 30 have been rejected. Claim 20 has also been canceled. Claim 19 herewith is amended. Claims presently active are claims 19, 21 to 26, and 29 to 30. Favorable reconsideration of the application in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants herewith affirm the election of species of the claimed invention.

The abstract has been changed to conform to the rules.

Claims 19-26, 29, and 30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsumoto et al. in view of Laney et al. It is the conclusion of the Examiner that "It would have been obvious to use Laney's teaching for using microbeads in the polyester material taught by Matsumoto because of the absorbency properties which efficiently absorb printed inks without the need of multiple processing steps or multiple coated layers." Additionally, the Examiner states, "It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention to pick of the directions to perform stretching in the machine direction first (machine) before the second direction (transverse)."

This rejection is respectfully traversed. As conceded by the Examiner Matsumoto does not teach blending inorganic particles into a melt comprising polylactic-acid-based material or forming interconnected microvoids. Laney, on the other hand teaches forming microvoids in poly(ethylene terephthalate) polyester and says nothing with respect to polylactic-acid-based materials. A key point is that none of the polyesters mentioned by Laney US Patent No. 6,379,780 that were evaluated for the open-cell voided absorbent layer could be produced as a mono-layered film without tearing during manufacturing. That is why Laney US Patent No. 6,379,780 claims a multi-layered film. The present invention is based on the unobvious discovery with a polylactic-acid material that the inventors were able to manufacture

(without tearing) the open-celled absorbent layer as a mono-layered film, which has significant value.

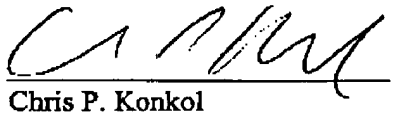
In view thereof, it follows that the subject matter of the claims would not have been obvious of Matsumoto et al. in view of Laney et al. at the time the invention was made.

Applicants have reviewed the prior art made of record and believe that singly or in any suitable combination, they do not render Applicants' claimed invention unpatentable.

In view of the foregoing remarks and amendment, the claims are now believed allowable and such favorable action is courteously solicited.

Should the Examiner consider that additional amendments are necessary to place the application in condition for allowance, the favor is requested of a telephone call to the undersigned counsel for the purpose of discussing such amendments.

Respectfully submitted,



Chris P. Konkol
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Registration No. 30,721

CPK:clb
Rochester, NY 14650
Telephone: (585) 722-0452
Facsimile: (585) 477-1148